



AGENDA FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE MONDAY 9TH MARCH 2026 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

There are stairs to the Council Chamber but if any member of the public has mobility issues the Council can relocate to the lower Guildhall.

You are hereby SUMMONED to attend the **Council Matters Committee** on **Monday 9th March 2026 at 6.30pm** in the Guildhall for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Committee Members: Councillors L Auletta, C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock, J Hannam, D Peters, E Price and M Trant.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair will read out the following statement:

Welcome to everyone attending and observing the meeting.

A reminder that open proceedings of this meeting will be video recorded. If members of the public make presentations, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

This meeting is limited to 90 minutes and therefore members are asked to raise their points succinctly and not repeat the same view expressed by colleagues if it does not add to the debate.

To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Committee or other items that affect Totnes.

The Committee will convene to consider the following items:

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 9th February 2026 and update on any matters arising. Document attached [page 3].

3. BUDGET MONITOR

To consider the Budget Monitor. Documents attached.

4. EARMARKED RESERVES

To review the Council's Earmarked Reserves at the end of financial year 2025/26 and considering allocation for FY 2026/27. Document to follow.

5. COMMUNITY AUDIT REPORT

To consider the findings of the Community Audit report. Document attached [page 7].

6. COUNCIL GRANTS REPORT

To consider a summary of the reports on the Council Grants awarded in June 2025. Document attached [page 17].

7. COMMUNITY FUNDING POLICY

To consider the draft Community Funding Policy. Document attached [page 18].

8. TOWN COUNCIL BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

To review the Business Continuity Plan for the Town Council. Document attached [page 23].

9. CIVIC BUDGET AND MAYORAL ALLOWANCE POLICY

To review the Civic Budget and Mayoral Allowance Policy. Document attached [page 35].

10. WORKING TIME AND LEAVE POLICY

To review the Working Time and Leave Policy. Document attached [page 38].

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 20th April 2026 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall. No document.

*The Committee will be asked to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public “by reason of the confidential nature of the business” to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

12. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for February (financial). Documents attached.

13. COUNCIL ASSETS

To receive an update on the condition of Council assets. Verbal update.

14. STAFFING UPDATE

For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors (staffing). Verbal update.

Catherine Marlton
Town Clerk
4th March 2026

USE OF SOUND RECORDINGS AT COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The open proceedings of this Meeting will be audio and video recorded. If members of the public make a representation, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber or Zoom meeting, attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

Televised, vision and sound recordings or live broadcastings by members of the press or public at Council or Committee debates are permitted and anyone wishing to do so is asked to inform the Chairman of the respective Committee of their intention to record proceedings.

ITEM 2 – CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS MONDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2026 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors D Peters (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock, J Hannam and E Price.

Apologies: Cllr M Trant.

In Attendance: C Marlton (Town Clerk).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair read a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded. The apologies were accepted.

The Committee adjourned for the following item:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

The Committee reconvened.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 12th January 2026 and update on any matters arising.

The minutes were **AGREED** unanimously as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. BUDGET MONITOR

To consider the Budget Monitor.

The budget monitor was **AGREED** unanimously.

4. STRATEGY DELIVERY WORKING GROUPS

To consider any budgetary recommendations from:

a. Environment and Public Realm Working Group, 21st January 2026.

Cemetery – Wild Area Maintenance. It was **AGREED** unanimously that £495 is allocated from the Climate Change Projects budget for the proposed late-April topping cut/frame/general tidy of the site.

Public Realm - SHDC Asset Refurbishment Plan (Bins and Benches). It was **AGREED** unanimously that funding is allocated from the Town Improvement Fund for:

- Purchase of two benches as part of the SHDC work at Vire Island and Heath Gardens (approx. £1k).

- Funding the difference in cost of SHDC installing Highlands rather than Tivoli benches (approx. £1k).
- Purchase of two benches for installation on Fore Street and The Plains once Devon Highways approval has been received (approx. £1k).

b. Economy Working Group, 4th February 2026.

Fringe Festival – It was **AGREED unanimously** that the Guildhall be offered to the Fringe Festival for two performances on one date (one afternoon and one evening with a Councillor present, so no staffing implications).

Support for the Totnes Business Forum – It was **AGREED** unanimously that £4000 from the Economy budget (paid incrementally) be confirmed for the setting up and support of the new Business Forum.

Christmas Markets – It was **AGREED** unanimously that the Christmas Markets start on the second Tuesday of December (dates 8th, 15th and 22nd December). This will require the Town Maintenance Team to work on the 23rd December which is the first day of the office Christmas closure.

Littlehempston Cycle Way consideration – It was **AGREED** that £2000 from the Active Travel allocation of the Economy Budget is confirmed for the Littlehempston cycle way.

5. COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENTS

To consider a summary of the Council's Risk Assessments.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council to note the Council's Risk Assessment Summary with the following amendments:

- Fire resisting doors in the Civic Hall – it was felt that the remedial works carried out on the doors, in conjunction with the other fire warning system and evacuation plan is sufficient to negate risk.
- Compartmentation of Birdwood House – work on high risk areas such as the electrical cupboard has been completed and the areas hirers have access to have protect escape routes and detection. This was felt sufficient to negate risk without further works to the wider Birdwood building that is listed, and used solely for storage.
- Familiarisation visits by the fire service at the Civic Hall – this is imminent now, the Totnes team were waiting on new recruits joining before undertaking this exercise.
- Fire Extinguisher training – it was felt a desk top based training for staff should be implemented, potentially during one of the monthly team meetings. Advice to staff remains to exit the building in event of fire, not to try to fight it.

6. COUNCIL GRANTS REPORT

To consider a summary of the reports on the Council Grants awarded in June 2025.

Noted. The Committee were pleased to see the positive updates and asked for some Council communications to be released about individual cases.

7. GUILDHALL DISPLAY CASES

To consider the minor re-organisation of some Guildhall display cases before the season opens in April.

It was **AGREED** unanimously to re-organise the Guildhall display cases as proposed.

8. CEMETERY FEES

To consider a review of the Cemetery Fees for financial year 2026/27.

It was **AGREED** unanimously to increase the cemetery fees from 1st April 2026 by 2.5 percent.

9. PENSIONS DISCRETION POLICY

To review the Pensions Discretion Policy.

It was **AGREED** to adopt the revised Pensions Discretion Policy.

10. FIXED ASSET REGISTER

To note the Council's Fixed Asset Register.

Noted.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 9th March 2026 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall.

Noted.

*The Committee **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public "by reason of the confidential nature of the business" to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

12. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for January (financial).

These were reviewed and **AGREED** unanimously.

13. GUILDHALL GARAGE OWNERSHIP

To consider an update on the ownership of the Guildhall Garage (legal).

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the response to South Hams District Council (SHDC) is that: 'Councillors would prefer a wider conversation about asset transfers from SHDC to the Town Council, rather than to engage at this current time about an individual asset'.

14. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

To consider the budget and staffing implications of the Marketing and Communications Audit (staffing).

It was **AGREED** unanimously to purchase two business phones for the Economic Support Officer and Marketing and Communications Officer.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it:

- Approves the restructure of two distinct roles from October 2026: Community Communications Officer (24 hrs); and Business and Economic Support Officer (24 hrs).
- Agrees that Visit Totnes is repositioned within the economic development and business support function.
- Agrees the outsourcing of agreed Visit Totnes elements to reduce officer workload and improve efficiency.

- Notes and approves the proposed interim arrangements from April to September 2026 – this means limited capacity and management of expectations when considering output.
- Approves the financial implications as outlined.

15. GUILDHALL WALL

To note an update on the structural survey carried out on the Guildhall Wall and the remedial works required (commercial).

It was **AGREED** unanimously to instruct Croft to write the LBC for the rebuild of the wall. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council to agree the increase the spend to undertake this work from £10,118.20 to £23,951.80. Councillors noted that £5,600 has already been spent, leaving a balance of £18,351.80.

14. STAFFING UPDATE

For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors (staffing).

Noted.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

Catherine Marlton
Town Clerk
February 2026

ITEM 5 – COMMUNITY AUDIT REPORT

Totnes Town Council – VCSE Audit – DRAFT Report

Dr. Nicola Frost & Dr. Ian Blackwell, Devon Community Foundation

March 2026

A. Summary – key points to inform decision-making

- Totnes' apparent affluence as a bustling town popular with visitors masks higher levels of deprivation than are seen in other South Hams towns. It has relatively high levels of economic inactivity, owing mainly to retirement, sickness or disability, and financial challenges linked to low income levels. Its other significant challenge is the quality and affordability of housing. It is however a safe place to live, with low crime and low levels of traffic accidents, and transport links are relatively good for a rural Devon location.
- Totnes has a thriving and diverse VCSE sector, ranging from larger, more established charities and social enterprises, to very small, informal community groups. There are an estimated 150 VCSE organisations working in Totnes with a positive culture of collaboration and a sense of shared values. The sector is made up of a mix of charities, CICs, Community Associations and unincorporated groups from those run by a single volunteer with an annual income less than £5,000p.a. to those employing several paid staff with income over £250,000p.a. 85% of respondents to our Survey had been in existence for over 5 years. Grants make up a significant proportion of sector income, with 40% reliant on grants.
- The sector faces several challenges. Recruiting a younger and more diverse volunteer base is an issue for many, as is paying volunteer expenses. Regular, secure funding is a universal challenge as day-to-day running costs increase alongside an increasing demand for services (with no corresponding increase in income). This highlights how precarious the VCSE sector is.
- The larger Town Council grants are an essential part of the sustainability of key organisations. TTC has regularly funded these organisations for many years and we recommend TTC moves to multi-year funding agreements. These will reduce TTC administration time and give these organisations security of income.
- **Bullet about TTC options to follow**

B. Context

Devon Community Foundation was commissioned by TTC between November 2025 and mid-March 2026 to deliver a community audit for Totnes. We were asked to:

- give an overview of Totnes' community and its needs using quantitative data.
- paint a picture of the nature and coverage of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations in the town, and its strengths and challenges in responding to this need (and identify any gaps).
- frame a set of questions and considerations for TTC to help it decide how best to use its convening and grantmaking resources to support community-based action in the town.

We have brought together a range of sources of insight to inform this report:

- analysis of population data relating to Totnes (supplied by Health Innovation South West)
- a VCSE Survey (December-January 2026); 46 respondents & analysis

- review of current reports, minutes and previous surveys (Caring Town Totnes, Town Council, TQ9 Partnership, Youth Strategy, Cultural Strategy, etc)
- two consultation meetings with VCSE sector organisations, attended by 15 individuals
- six face-to-face meetings with key individuals, plus regular meetings with Clerk and Councillors
- we have also drawn on DCF's independent *State of the Sector* surveys, which covered both registered and unregistered groups across Devon, and on our involvement with developing a social health model for understanding place-based community development.

C. Overview of Population Data

This section draws on data from Health Innovation SW (see Appendix 1 for a more detailed account).

The Town Council footprint has a population of approximately 9,200 people (4,400 households). Over the next 20 years, the population of Totnes is expected to age (the number of people aged under 20 will decrease, with far more people aged over 80). The overall picture in Totnes shows a population broadly reflecting average UK communities. The centre of town has mixed housing types, moderate ethnic diversity, intermediate or low-skilled employment, and higher-than-average unemployment, while suburban or edge-of-town locations feature middle-aged, more highly educated homeowners, who are employed in skilled/professional roles, with high car ownership and low ethnic diversity. In Follaton and East Bridgetown, however, a third of the population are classified as 'Semi- and Unskilled Workforce' and in the KEVICCS/Borough Park/West Bridgetown area we also have semi- and unskilled workers, alongside 'Legacy Communities', which refers to older, low-income populations in flats or social housing, with high disability and unemployment rates. In East Bridgetown about a fifth of the residents are retired professionals.

Totnes is notable for its economically inactive population, often owing to retirement, sickness or disability. The proportion of retired people across the town (except Follaton) is in the highest 30% in the country, and is in the highest 20% in Town Centre, South area and East Bridgetown. This is compounded by high level of economically inactive residents who are long term sick or disabled – again, in the highest 30% across the town, and the area covering KEVICCS/Borough Park/ West Bridgetown is in the highest 20% in the country. Citizens' Advice (CA) says 60% of people who request support are disabled or have a long-term health condition, a third (37%) have multiple impairments, 22% present with a mental health condition and a fifth (20%) have a physical impairment. 80% of CA users are aged 40 or over, and 71% are single people.

As noted in a report to the Town Council in 2025, Totnes is the most deprived market town in the South Hams. Totnes is the only South Hams market town with multiple LSOAs below the 6th decile, with several neighbourhoods falling within the more deprived 40% of areas nationally, meaning inequality and low-income pressures are statistically greater than those in other towns. The CA Impact Report for Totnes notes the high level of demand from residents for financial advice, such as accessing benefits, shopping costs, paying bills and tackling household debt in 2025, with a 25% rise in demand for these kinds of support compared to 2024. This contrasts with the generally low levels of deprivation seen in

Kingsbridge, Dartmouth and Ivybridge, where most neighbourhoods fall within the least deprived half of England. The apparent affluence of the South Hams and the busy historic town centre of Totnes mask many of the challenges facing residents. Totnes is then, broadly speaking, comparable to Tiverton and Axminster - towns facing similar pressures around low income, economic inactivity and access to affordable housing.

Unlike the South Hams as a whole, where rates of unemployment and economic inactivity among adults are falling, there are high levels of unemployment, particularly in the KEVICC/Borough Park/West Bridgetown area, East Bridgetown and Follaton.

Of those accessing Citizen's Advice services, 30% are in employment, indicating that in-work poverty can be a challenge for many. According to CA, more people who previously managed their household budgets now seeking support with bills. As the CA Cost of Living Report says:

'[there are] ongoing and elevated levels of financial vulnerability within the Totnes community. Energy affordability remains a dominant issue, with knock-on impacts in debt and food insecurity. Demand has not returned to anything like pre-pandemic levels, indicating continued need for frontline advice, hardship support and targeted intervention funding'.

As in other parts of Devon, lower-than-average incomes in households with children and where people are older is a cause for concern in Totnes. The KEVICCS/ Borough Park/ West Bridgetown area is in the more deprived decile (4) for income deprivation affecting children, while income deprivation affecting older people shows more deprivation in the Follaton, KEVICC/ Borough Park/ East Bridgetown, and South Totnes areas.

Housing quality is a significant challenge. The centre of Totnes is in the most deprived 10% of the country in terms of indoor environment and housing quality (and the south part of Totnes is in the most deprived 30%). This reflects the high number of properties (both historic and modern) with poor insulation, without central heating or in poor condition. Poor quality housing in areas with more of a mix of housing types, including the Follaton and Bridgetown areas, (private/ freehold, leasehold and rented/ social housing), may not show up so clearly in statistical data, but can still be a problem. CA and Live West know many residents with poor drainage, inadequate insulation, draughty windows and doors, leaks and mould. These issues inevitably push up people's energy bills, and can lead to physical and mental health problems. A third of local renters struggle to heat their homes to a comfortable temperature, and more than two in five private renters had to ration gas and electricity to afford their energy bills last winter (CAB Report: 2024). In contrast, air quality, noise pollution and road traffic accidents involving pedestrians and cyclist are all below average.

Educational deprivation is defined statistically through measuring the proportion of households where no-one has at least a Level 2 qualification (e.g., 5+ GCSEs at A*-C) and no-one aged 16 to 18 is a full-time student. Follaton is in the most deprived 30% of the country for children and young people in this respect. The rate of young people aged 19 and over in FE, training or skills in Totnes is 11% below the national average (although apprenticeships have increased in the previous five years).

Totnes is well connected through transport links. In the central areas accessibility to key services (schools, GPs, libraries, shops, amenities, etc) is good, however, this is not the case in the Follaton and East Bridgetown areas - Follaton is in the most deprived 20% of the country in terms of access to services (similar to the most rural areas in the South West).

Crime levels are very low in Totnes.

D. The Volunteer, Community, Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector in Totnes

Totnes has a thriving and diverse VCSE sector, ranging from larger, more established charities and social enterprises, to very small, informal community groups. The updated spreadsheet of community organisations that the Town Council holds lists about 150 VCSE organisations working in Totnes.

We sent out a survey to all these organisations in early January and received 46 responses from a range of local VCSE organisations (Charities, CICs, Community Associations and unincorporated groups) of all sizes, from those run by a single volunteer to those employing several paid staff, including garden projects, sports clubs, KEVICC, Caring Town, Citizens' Advice, faith organisations/churches, heritage bodies and food initiatives. As with most of Devon, the objectives of VCSE sector in Totnes are to support community health and wellbeing (in a broad sense), with a tendency towards families and children.

There is longevity in the local VCSE sector – 85% have been in existence for five years or more. Annual income ranges from less than £5,000p.a. to organisations with an income over £250,000p.a. Grants make up a major part of the income of all organisations (78.3%), with 40% heavily reliant on them. Just over half (55.6%) had had a TTC grant, a quarter had not (24.4%). Volunteers are important to nearly all organisations, large or small.

The majority of VCSE organisations have links with multiple partners (with all but one respondent mentioning partners). Key organisations and projects in the town are Totnes Caring, the Town Council, Caring Town Totnes, TRAYE, schools/ education providers, sports clubs, SHDC, Transition Town, CAB and Bridgetown Alive! It is worth considering organisations that do not feature in the list of partners, e.g. the police are mentioned once, while social housing providers (LiveWest), social prescribing services, arts and cultural organisations, care home settings and NHS services/ the GP surgeries in Totnes are not mentioned at all.

D1. Strengths

Good collaboration: we have noted very few tensions between organisations, and there is a healthy level of collaboration, although the momentum for this does tend to rest with a very small number of people, and is therefore personal rather than structural. Where provision overlaps, for example with community transport, youth services or food projects, partnerships are in place and communication is good (so issues are being managed well between organisations). Some successful thematic, multi-partner networks exist, such as the TQ9 Cost-of-Living Partnership (although there are opportunities to develop these further).

In addition, there is a general consensus that the [Caring Town digital Directory](#) should be maintained and enhanced as the town's VCSE Directory. The current Directory, while it requires updating, is felt to be the simplest solution for both residents and organisations in

the town. We recommend the Directory focuses on organisations that are active in the town – other listings already exist (e.g. Devon Connect) for wider services, such as drug helplines or AgeUK Devon. There is also some interest in piloting the [Frontline Referrals App](#) for the town – the pilot would need to explore whether this is a useful tool for individuals and VCSE organisations to contact and link with relevant services and activities. Our consultation suggests this App might be enhanced by including a wider range of services, including businesses, sports/ leisure options, places to eat, etc so it has a wider appeal across the population – but this all needs to be tested prior to any major investment in a town app. It is also important that the Library continues to be involved in all these developments as this is where many people go for information and advice, especially those who prefer a face-to-face service.

There is a general sense of *shared values* (although these have not been shared between organisations nor, for some, articulated publicly).

Resilient and adaptable culture: Staff and volunteers across the sector display high commitment, passion and resilience, responding flexibly to community needs even during challenging circumstances, such as COVID-19, the Cost-of-Living Crisis and ongoing funding challenges. This adaptability has enabled organisations to maintain services when statutory provision has contracted and in the face of severe funding pressures, however the VCSE sector is now in a precarious situation (see ‘Funding Instability’ below).

D2. Challenges

Funding instability: All organisations reported financial challenges to their long-term sustainability, mainly securing day-to-day running costs combined with increasing demand for services (with no corresponding increase in income). Organisations face competition for short-term, limited funding that creates financial insecurity and prevents long-term planning. It is concerning that many organisations report having no or very limited reserves, and struggle to cover the basics, such as rent and volunteer expenses. The wait for funding to arrive into bank accounts, once it has been agreed, causes cash-flow problems for the sector. The current funding environment can also lead organisations to adapt projects to fit funding criteria rather than community needs. Apart from the Caring Town ‘We Care’ programme, we are not aware of joint funding bids and strategic alignment between VCSE organisations - these forms of co-operation could, we believe, be of benefit to the sector and the town, and potentially be of more interest to funders who are seeking to most effective use of their investments.

Lack of strategic context: very few VCSE organisations made reference to existing strategic documents, such as the Totnes Town Council Strategic Plan, Totnes Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Economic Strategy or the Cultural Strategy for Totnes (the Youth Strategy was, however, mentioned by several youth organisations). As the role of the community and voluntary sector in supporting the health and wellbeing of residents features in all these strategic documents, it is important that these documents inform the sector's objectives and ambitions. We suggest these strategic documents are better understood and more firmly embedded in the town's VCSE sector.

Capturing and Reporting Impact: while organisations contribute to improving people's lives, there is limited understanding of how best to capture and report on the impact of this work. In addition, the impact of the whole and sub-sections of the VCSE sector in the town is

limited; for instance, despite the delivery of vital services, it is difficult to articulate the impact of all the youth-focused work across the town. As elsewhere in the county, organisations have limited capability to translate their evidence base into robust assessment of local impact, and they rarely have the resources to effectively 'tell their story'. This is likely to weaken the position of some organisations in securing funding (e.g. applying for grants) and being involved in public commissioning processes. Overall, this reduces the VCSE sector's influence on strategic decision-making. Improving the collection and analysis of impact data, for example through guidance on evaluation and communicating the sector's impact could be a role for a centrally funded infrastructure organisation. The report done by the Torbay VCSE Network is a good example of a collective Impact Report (albeit at the level of unitary authority, rather than a town council) [see Torbay VCSE Network Report March 2025](#).

Physical Spaces: the physical location of key services was a concern to some of the participants. For example, Follaton House, while it has good parking, was not seen as particularly accessible to many residents e.g. those in Bridgetown and those without a car. Those offering youth services reported that they 'worked out of the boot of their cars' - they were keen to secure a permanent base, such as the underused Rushbrook, for office space and a venue that young people could 'make their own'. Overall, there was much support for the efforts to secure a permanent base from which community organisations could operate (both REDACTED and Rushbrook were noted as suitable venues and the Town Council, with partners, is currently exploring securing one or both of these premises).

Infrastructure: Following the closure of South Hams Community Action, there is no local organisation with the capacity to support the voluntary and community sector long-term. This has led to a number of gaps:

- around three-quarters of organisations experience challenges in recruiting, training and retaining a diverse pool of volunteers (especially younger people). A collective approach to this could be more effective and reduce the burden on organisations.
- organisations of all kinds told us they would benefit from a range of opportunities to come together in person to network with others, share challenges, and hear updates from TTC and other local services. Some opportunities currently exist but they are not necessarily known about by everyone and these can rely very heavily on a small number of individuals (e.g. TQ9 Partnership).
- while the TQ9 Partnership is open to all groups and is an important platform to enable sharing, in reality it can be difficult for the smallest groups to participate in partnerships and collaborations on the same terms as much larger organisations. This is likely to become more of an issue for smaller organisations if Caring Town/ the TQ9 Partnership fold.

D3. The role of Caring Town Totnes

Renewing Caring Town Totnes: As explained above, the VCSE sector aspires to closer co-operation; the sharing of ideas and programmes; a deeper integration into strategic decision-making processes; breaking down silos between services, reducing duplication, sharing resources (notably building and digital infrastructure); and establishing community-centred service models. This could be achieved by revitalising 'Caring Town Totnes' as a strategic CVS-type organisation, with multi-year funding. In addition, a Community Hub (based at REDACTED and/ or at Rushbrook) could bring together statutory and voluntary

provision in ways that make sense to communities and delivery. Together, these two developments would greatly enhance the ability of the VCSE sector to contribute to town priorities.

Participants in the audit recognised that this organisation requires long-term funding to help it get established, to develop its services and to demonstrate its value, and it is our view that TTC is best-placed to support such a function. As CTT is currently looking to secure new Charity Trustees, there are opportunities for a revitalised CTT to act as a central point for coalescing local services and funding, and for supporting many of the infrastructure needs outlined above.

There was also interest in the aspiration that CTT could be located in premises from which it could act – ideally - as a similar hub to the one in Paignton Library, hosting VCSE partner organisations (e.g. some VCSE agencies could also be based there); providing a welcoming and accessible space where local residents can receive help and guidance on a wide range of issues; and as base where support for the VCSE sector can be offered (e.g. rooms used for training and meetings).

There are some very good mechanisms for communicating with residents and sharing ‘what’s on’ and service information in the town (Totnes Library, TQ9 Partnership, Totnes Pulse, the Climate Hub, notice-boards, the Caring Town website, etc). There is a lack, however, of inter-organisational data sharing, sharing impact data and sharing policies – ‘wheel reinvention’ could be reduced with better information-sharing mechanisms between VCSE organisations and this is a further role for CTT. The CTT website also has an important role to play in the local VCSE infrastructure.

CTT would need to be renamed/ rebranded as the name Caring Town, it was felt, is too confusing when Totnes Caring exists. Also, ‘Caring’ suggests the organisation is focused on caring/ adult social care when, in fact, its remit is much broader and includes (or should include) all age groups.

The Town Council is best placed, we believe, to part fund the renewed Caring Town organisation over the next few years to enable it to refresh, strengthen its role and secure its future in town.

E. Current TTC Grant-making

In April 2022 the Town Council awarded £24,900 to 11 projects, ranging from £550 to £7,000 (£25,394 was requested; 98% of application value). The total value of all the projects that applied was £58,538, so TTC funded 42.5% of the overall project costs.

In October 2022, £25,042 was awarded to 11 projects, ranging from £800 to £7,000 (£78,240 was requested; 32% of application value). The total value of all the projects that applied was £168,005 so TTC funded 15% of the overall project costs.

In June 2023 £24,953 was awarded to 8 projects ranging from £500 to £6,626 (£65,834 was requested; 38% of application value). The total value of all the projects that applied was £99,120, so TTC funded 25% of the overall project costs.

In June 2024, £41,072 was awarded to 14 projects ranging from £750 to £8,000 (£103,576 was requested; 40% of application value). The total value of all the projects that applied was £551,120 so TTC funded 7.5% of the overall project costs.

In June 2025, £31,000 was awarded to 13 projects ranging from £600 to £5,000 (£98,250 was requested; 31.5% of application value). The total value of all the projects that applied was £551,735 so TTC funded 5.6% of the overall project costs.

The much larger overall project sums in June 2024 and June 2025 are partly due to the skatepark, Stepping Stones and St. Mary's Church projects. Nonetheless, there is a clearly a significant increase in requests in the amount of grant funding from TTC.

Many grants are regular, 'repeat customers'. The majority of grants fund ongoing running costs or regular activity/service delivery. A smaller number support festivals and events, and a few contribute towards larger capital projects (though these are often paid from reserves rather than the grant making budget).

The amount contributed is usually a significant proportion of total costs, especially with larger grants, which are an essential part of the funding for core VCSE organisations, such as TRAYE, CAB and Caring Town. Without the TTC investment each year, these organisations would not continue to operate at their current level in the town and could risk closing altogether. TTC is almost never the sole funder. The Town Council small grants are seen as a supportive tool for local projects but small grants are not seen as 'make or break' - that is to say, small grants are very welcome but VCSE organisations know that they cannot rely on TTC grants.

The audit indicates there is some confusion about when people can apply for larger TTC grants, how much is available and how they apply. For example, participants in the audit asked if there is a different set of criteria for larger grants as opposed to smaller grants, and who was eligible for larger grants and who was not. Some were unsure whether they needed to first go through a 'friendly' Town Councillor who could 'sponsor' their application, and others had missed application deadlines because they had missed information about the grants process. As one contributor said:

'We make an application to TTC as part of their grant application process each year. I'm not really sure if we apply for the larger or the smaller grants. Every successful organisation received a proportion of what they'd asked for last time.'

F. How might TTC support VCSE organisations in Totnes?

It is not within TTC's gift (or its responsibility) to single-handedly improve access to affordable, decent housing, or to lift households out of poverty. But it is well-placed to support the thriving ecosystem of local community-based organisations working to improve the lives of Totnes residents in a targeted way that respond to the challenges set out above. TTC's grant-making pots (both the individual strands and the larger central one) are an important 'lever' it has to pull in this respect. One response is obviously by **directly funding the provision of activities and services to residents** through these organisations. This can include everything from supporting events and festivals that promote wellbeing and community cohesion, to contributing funds to organisations that provide practical support and advice for those in financial need. These grants can be smaller contributions to grassroots activities or more substantial funding for key services.

Another option is to move to providing **focused investment in infrastructure mechanisms** that add value to what individual organisations do, addressing some of the issues described above (while simultaneously maintaining the small grants programme).

TTC also has **other resources** that could support community activity beyond its grant-making. These include:

- its ability to **convene** groups of people and support **communication** with other tiers of local government, public sector organisations and local businesses (e.g. South Hams Chamber).
- the potential to manage physical **asset transfers** from other public or charitable bodies. This could become even more important as local government reorganisation progresses.
- And its capacity to take a lead in establishing collective forms of working, such as community hubs.

Given the significant past demand on TTC's grant-making budget, it is sensible for the Council to consider a more strategic approach to grant-making, informed by the needs of residents and of community organisations (as outlined above). We suggest TTC considers these questions:

- what long-term outcomes would it like to see from its grant-making?
- where can TTC support be most impactful? (i.e. what would it most like to see happen that is least likely to be enabled by funding from elsewhere?)

We suggest that TTC considers stratifying more clearly its approach to grant-making into two strands:

- a series of **smaller grants** aimed at contributing to practical activity advancing overall council aims (e.g. community cohesion), as well as specific strategic strands (environment, particular demographics, cultural activities). These can be applied for through an 'open call'.
- a set of **larger, multi-year grants** that provide selected organisation with a robust base for resident services deemed critical to retain or develop in the town and/ or finance infrastructural support for the whole VCSE sector. The criteria for awarding these multi-year grants (ideally for 3+years) would need to be clearly expressed and would likely need to mirror an SLA agreement. As these grants would be to deliver specific, strategic outcomes, they would not, therefore, be awarded through a tendering process.

To thrive, the VCSE sector requires long-term, adequate funding that supports both core and project costs. The Town Council alone is unable to provide this funding, however, it is in a position to lead and enable this funding to flow into the town and to influence how it is spent. The Town Council could facilitate a shift from short-term projects or transactional procurement to trust-based partnerships that value collective working, prevention and community-led solutions. The Town Council itself can take a lead in sustaining the sector and breaking the short-term funding cycle for organisations delivering core services by introducing multi-year funding agreements, whilst seeking to match their investment from external sources.

Overall, we conclude this moment in time offers an opportunity to embed a neighbourhood approach to tackling health and wellbeing challenges in the community, using the VCSE

sector's range of values, skills, resources and relationships to further build neighbourhood resilience in partnership with other partners and providers. However, in order to achieve this ambition, key sector organisations need funding security and continued Town Council support.

End-note: While the results of the VCSE Survey have not yet been shared, the process itself was viewed as a very useful exercise. The sector saw the survey as an opportunity to understand the wider issues it is (and colleagues are) facing. It could be worthwhile repeating this 'state of the sector' survey every one or two years to help guide, inform and respond to challenges. We would recommend that the results of the Survey are circulated to the VCSE sector (see Appendix 2).

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Totnes Ward population ONS Data Summary [See separate document]

Appendix 2 – VCSE Survey Results [See separate document]

Appendix 3 – CAB Cost of Living Report

Appendix 4 – VCSE Totnes organisations (updated)

ITEM 6 – COUNCIL GRANTS REPORT

TTC Community Grants Awarded in June and October 2025 – Summary of Reports

Applicant	Grant Awarded	Outcome/Update
Stepping Stones – Food and Wellbeing	£5000	<u>Summary</u> – No information received. <u>Project Assessment</u> –
Resilient Lives – Pizza Pirates	£1500	<u>Summary</u> – No information received. <u>Project Assessment</u> –
Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement (TRAYE) Projects: Totnes Youth Leisure Night; The Youth Can Make A Difference Forum; & Bridgetown Youth Club.	£10500 (awarded October 2025)	<u>Summary</u> – We spent the grant funding on the continued running of projects outlined, these were: Totnes Youth Leisure Night; The Youth Can make A Difference Forum; Bridgetown Youth Club. As of February 2026, we have not received any of the £10500 but made a decision to continue these projects paid for from our small reserves. [Officer note: the invoice from TRAYE has now been received and paid.] <u>Project Assessment</u> – Totnes Youth Leisure Night: This project goes from strength to strength. Numbers are high with average attendance of 45-50 young people with a total of over 300 young people signed up. The Youth Can Make A difference Forum: We have good attendance with an average of 12 young people attending each session. There are over 100 young people signed up to the project. Bridgetown Youth Club continues to be a valuable asset to the local young people. Attendance is high around 20 young people/session with a total of 50 young people signed up to the project from the local area.

ITEM 7 – COMMUNITY FUNDING POLICY

DRAFT Totnes Town Council Community Funding Policy 2026

For consideration: March Council Matters (and then April Full Council)

Review Date: February 2027

Totnes Town Council Community Funding is designed to support local charities, community organisations and individuals providing services or events within the Totnes parish boundary. This policy sets out the criteria for applying for a grant from the Town Council, regardless of which grant fund is being applied to. Grants awarded by Totnes Town Council are public money, collected as part of the town precept and we are accountable to local people for all expenditure. Therefore, we apply criteria to each application.

Purpose

Totnes Town Council recognises that community organisations provide essential services that improve quality of life for residents within the parish boundary. The Council has a duty to spend public money responsibly, transparently, and in alignment with its Strategic Priorities.

- This policy sets out one of two funding streams: Small Grants – Working Group Allocations

Members should note that consideration of the larger Community Grant allocation and strategic funding will be considered after conclusion of the Community Audit by DCF.

Small Grants Programme (Working Group Allocations)

The Small Grants Programme is intended to support smaller-scale, time-limited projects and initiatives. It does not provide ongoing core service funding and is a one-off award.

2026/27 budget allocations:

- Community Working Group: £5,000
- Economy Working Group: £2,500 Event Sponsorship
- Economy Working Group: £2,500 Business Support
- Environment & Public Realm Working Group: £5,000

Maximum individual grant: £1,000

These grants support smaller initiatives, pilot projects, events, environmental improvements, and community activities that benefit Totnes residents.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Operate primarily for the benefit of Totnes residents
- Align with Council Strategic Priorities

Important Terms and Conditions

The applicant must prove:

- There is clear evidence of need for the project.
- Grants cannot cover costs that have already been incurred.

- Applications from organisations and services which receive other sources of government and local government funding must demonstrate how the project differs from their core services and how the wider community is involved (for example schools must provide evidence that the project is not for the primary purpose of teaching its students).
- All supporting documents are required to be submitted with the application form.
- The organisation must invoice the Town Council for the grant awarded and submission of this invoice and the application form will be considered acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined in this policy.

Some examples of projects considered:

- Funding for printing of leaflets or advertising for an event that has economic or community benefits
- Materials to improve the public realms – plants, compost, seeds, paint etc.
- Stock to give to local residents facing food poverty
- Room hire to facilitate an event that has local benefits
- Costs associated with youth support, mental health, bereavement and emotional needs, not already funded as a statutory service.
- Organisation of a community arts event which is open to town participation and attendance.
- Funding for sports clubs improvements
- Funding for youth activity schemes

The following guidelines should be considered:

- The grant period will be for the financial year in which it is granted and applicants are asked to submit an end of project completion statement in February.
- Please tell us the least amount of funding you need in order to help make funds go as far as possible.
- Each application will be considered on an individual basis and in light of what funding is available at the point of receipt.
- Bear in mind that we are expecting to receive a high number of applications and may only be able to part fund your project or not fund it at all.

Who can apply:

- Not-for-profit, constituted organisations.
- Registered charities.
- Social enterprises, including CICs.
- Unincorporated clubs and associations.
- Schools, where the support is outside of statutory provision and is directed at addressing hardship faced by families with children at the school
- Individuals – only if the project has significant benefits to Totnes residents

All applicants must:

- Have a bank account in the name of the applicant.
- Be based locally and provide proof of address and ID.

What can't be funded

- Loss of income.

- Large capital items, including vehicles.
- Parties, alcohol or shopping trips.
- Promotion of religious or political activity.
- Large scale building works.
- Grants awarded to individuals by the funded organisation.
- Support delivered by a national charity where there is no local branch.
- Retrospective funding.

Supporting documents

The following documents WILL BE REQUIRED to support your application and shown to members considering the application, but not shared in the public domain:

- A copy of a bank statement, dated within the last 3 months and clearly showing the account name, number and sort code.
- Proof of address – utility bill, business rates or council tax bill etc.
- Photo ID.

Please note that applications without these documents at the time of submission cannot be considered

Scoring Mechanism to assess applications

Every application received during the application windows will be considered by the Council Matters Committee who will make a recommendation to Full Council. Key considerations will be:

- Working with others; networking/partnering;
- Getting more people involved - widening participation.
- How the project meets the Town Council priorities.
- How the project improves the lives of Totnes residents.

Assessment Process

- Eligibility check by officers
- Consideration by the relevant Working Group
- Final decision by Council Matters

Timeline

- Grant applications open 15 April 2026.
- They will be considered by the next available relevant Working Group and then the following Council Matters committee.
- Please note that although this fund is open all year, the budget allocation is finite, and each application will be considered against the priorities of the Working Group applied to.
- Please be aware that the application process could take 2-3 months to reach a decision.

Payment Requirements

- All grants should be spent for the purposes stated on the application only.

- Totnes Town Council reserves the right to recall any grant given to a project or organisation which ceases to operate during the financial year for which the grant has been given.
- The Council reserves the right to request a copy of invoices/receipts as evidence that expenditure has been incurred and under spends may need to be returned, please ensure receipts are kept for 12 months following expenditure.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Applicants receiving grants are required to report on how the funds are spent against the project criteria and budget breakdown.
- A form will be provided and you will be notified of the date by which it must be completed and returned.
- Totnes Town Council representatives may request to visit the project, to talk to staff, participants to gain a better understanding of its merits and benefits to local people.

Publicity Requirements

- Totnes Town Council expects its logo to appear in published information about the funded project(s) and to be mentioned in press and associated publicity and will ask for evidence to be provided for monitoring purposes.
- For our own publicity material, the Council may require photos with agreement from participants and may use the name of the applicant and project.
- Totnes Town Council will publish grants awarded and summarise the projects using information contained in the grant application form.
- If the Council becomes aware of evidence of dishonesty or negligence which could bring the reputation of Totnes Town Council into disrepute, action will be taken and the grant terminated.

IMPORTANT – Transparency Notice

All information submitted (excluding personal data such as personal bank account details and personal contact details/ID) will be placed in the public domain as part of Council agenda papers.

Appendix A – Small Grants Application Form

Section 1 – Funding Stream

Please indicate which fund you are applying to:

- Community Working Group (£5,000 annual budget)
- Economy Working Group – Event Sponsorship (£2,500)
- Economy Working Group – Business Support (£2,500)
- Environment & Public Realm Working Group (£5,000)

Amount requested (max £1,000): £ _____

Section 2 – Applicant Details

- Name of applicant (individual/group/organisation)
- Address (must be within or directly linked to Totnes parish)

- Contact details
- Proof of local connection provided: Yes

Section 3 – Project Details

- Description of activity
- Date(s)
- Location
- Estimated number of Totnes residents benefiting
- Which Council priority does this support?

Section 4 – Budget Summary

Total project cost: £_____

Amount requested: £_____

Other income secured: £_____

Please attach a simple breakdown.

Section 5 – Supporting Documents Checklist

The following are required:

For organisations:

- Bank statement (dated within 3 months)
- Proof of address

For individuals:

- Bank statement (dated within 3 months)
- Photo ID
- Proof of address

These documents will be viewed by officers and councillors but will not be placed in the public domain.

Please note that applications received without these documents cannot be considered

Declaration

I confirm that:

- The information provided is accurate
- The project benefits Totnes residents
- Funds will only be used for the stated purpose

Signature:

Date:



TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to prepare our business in the event of extended service outages caused by factors beyond our control and to restore services to the widest extent possible in a minimum time frame.

Outcome

The outcome of this plan is to ensure that the business is able to maintain a good level of service for our customers.

Plan objectives

- Serves as a guide for those implementing our business continuity plan
- Assists in avoiding confusion experienced during a crisis by documenting, testing and reviewing recovery procedures.
- References and points to the location of critical data.
- Provides procedures and resources needed to assist in recovery.
- Ensure Councillors are kept up to date should the plan be activated

Key staff

If a disaster occurs the members of our team tasked with enacting this plan are:
The Town Clerk, Management Team, Administrators and Town Maintenance Officer.

Staff Welfare

It must be recognised that an incident that results in the enacting of this plan may also cause additional pressures for staff. Staff members need to be given clear direction about the priorities of the business. Managers must ensure that they monitor staff more closely to ensure that their welfare is maintained.

Staff should be aware of what their role is when a major disruption occurs. Clear and concise communication with staff is pivotal to having an organised response. Staff must be made aware of what communication methods are going to be used so they can find out the latest information, if they are going to be working from a different location than normal.

Managers who suspect that staff members have suffered undue stress or even trauma from the business disruption must consider providing assistance for those staff who have been affected.

Communicating with and by staff

The Town Clerk or a member of the Management Team will communicate with staff all updates and news regarding any emergency incident.

All communication with the press must be approved by in advance by the Town Clerk.

Any interview with the press will be undertaken by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

Communicating with Councillors

The Town Clerk or a member of the Management Team, shall, in the first instance, notify the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of any updates and news regarding an emergency incident followed by communication to all councillors.

Communicating with the Public

Communications with the public should be via the TTC website, social media, local news outlets and notice boards all to be issued by the Communications Officer on instruction from the Clerk or a member of the Management Team.

Equipment

The Council server and staff e-mail accounts are Internet based so all staff can work away from the office in an emergency using their own PCs or work laptops.

The telephones are also Internet based and these can be diverted to telephones away from the office or to mobile phones.

The Town Maintenance team have mobile phones and their numbers are shared with all members of staff.

Data Protection

When working away from the office or from home, as a result of an unexpected office closure, all data on the Council's server (One Drive) must be protected in accordance with the Totnes Town Council Information and Data Protection Policy and working practices must be in line with General Data Protection Regulations.

February 2025

Event	Minimise Impact / Mitigation	Immediate Action	Continuity	Longer Term
<p>Damage to Guildhall and offices due to fire, storm, flood, terrorism, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain adequate insurance cover • Fire risk assessment in place • Fire equipment regularly checked, serviced and maintained • Fire emergency alarms checked and serviced • Fire equipment inspection logs updated and maintained • Gas supply and equipment facilitating use of gas is serviced regularly in accordance with legislation and/or manufacturers recommendations • Storage of chemicals, combustible materials and ignition flash points are rigorously controlled and stored in accordance with legislation and/or manufacturers recommendations • Electrical equipment is subjected to regular inspections • Electrical wiring and other fixed electrical equipment is inspected, checked and findings recorded and defects rectified • Building work to be undertaken by competent tradesmen • Security of the building is rigorously maintained. • A contract is in place for an emergency response out of hours. 	<p>Emergency services to be contacted in the first instance where applicable (fire services, police, ambulance etc.). TMO or most senior council officer present to liaise with emergency services.</p> <p>If event occurs during the working day, staff to relocate to the Civic Hall for a team meeting to allocate immediate action tasks/duties.</p> <p>Clerk to contact Mayor and advise all councillors.</p> <p>Clerk to inform insurance Company.</p>	<p>Staff to relocate to working from home.</p> <p>Arrange for telephone calls to be diverted as appropriate.</p> <p>Update the Council website to show offices closed due to unforeseen circumstances and advise public to use phone or e-mail to contact the Council.</p> <p>Contact hirers of the Guildhall to cancel any affected bookings.</p>	<p>In conjunction with the Insurers, arrange for repairs to the premises.</p> <p>Review cause and update risk assessment and procedures to minimise the risk from future occurrences.</p>

<p>Damage to Civic Hall due to fire, storm, flood, terrorism, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain adequate insurance cover • Fire risk assessment in place • Fire equipment regularly checked, serviced and maintained • Fire emergency alarms checked and serviced • Fire equipment inspection logs updated and maintained • Gas supply and equipment facilitating use of gas is serviced regularly in accordance with legislation and/or manufacturers recommendations • Storage of chemicals, combustible materials and ignition flash points are rigorously controlled and stored in accordance with legislation and/or manufacturers recommendations • Electrical equipment is subjected to regular inspections • Electrical wiring and other fixed electrical equipment is inspected, checked and findings recorded and defects rectified • Building work to be undertaken by competent tradesmen • Building kept secure when not in use by hirers. • A contract is in place for an emergency response out of hours. 	<p>Emergency services to be contacted in the first instance where applicable (fire services, police, ambulance etc.). TMO to liaise with emergency services.</p> <p>TMO to notify nearby businesses to evacuate if necessary.</p> <p>Clerk to contact Mayor and advise all councillors.</p> <p>Clerk to inform insurance Company.</p> <p>Clerk/TMO to inform freeholder (SHDC).</p>	<p>Contact hirers to cancel affected bookings.</p> <p>Update the Council website to show the Civic Hall as closed due to unforeseen circumstances.</p>	<p>In conjunction with the Insurers and freeholder, arrange for repairs to the premises.</p> <p>Review cause and update risk assessment and procedures to minimise the risk from future occurrences.</p>
<p>Loss of Council documents due to fire, flood, theft</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure valuable documents are stored securely in fire/flood proof cabinets 	<p>Clerk to contact Mayor and inform Councillors.</p>	<p>Council to discuss at next meeting.</p>	<p>Review procedures to ensure improvements</p>

or other causes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide secure storage of paper documents • Ensure backup copies of paper documents are available i.e. electronic version, photocopy stored at an alternative location, copies obtainable from bank etc 	<p>Clerk to inform insurance company if necessary. Review CCTV if appropriate to identify any culprits and report to Police if necessary.</p> <p>Consider security controls – change of locks or passwords.</p>	<p>Instigate use of stored / backup material or obtain duplicates.</p>	<p>implemented where necessary.</p>
Loss of Council electronic data due to corruption or damage, fault or breakdown of hardware.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure online data protected by robust passwords which are regularly updated • Computers subject to annual electrical test and rolling upgrade programme 	<p>IT contractors to be contacted to give advice and deal with the issue. Data to be reinstated from cloud back-up.</p> <p>Clerk to inform Councillors.</p> <p>Clerk to inform insurance company if necessary.</p> <p>Update physical and electronic security procedures as required.</p>	<p>Review incident with IT contractor to improve procedures.</p> <p>Assess whether any breach of data protection regulations has occurred and whether any notification to the Information Commissioner is required.</p>	<p>Review procedures to ensure improvements implemented where necessary.</p>
Loss of equipment due to theft, damage, fault or breakdown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain adequate insurance cover • Ensure regular maintenance carried out • Regularly review security arrangements 	<p>Report theft / criminal damage to police.</p> <p>Review CCTV if appropriate to identify any culprits and report to Police if necessary.</p>	<p>Arrange hire of equipment where possible.</p> <p>Arrange purchase of new equipment within current financial regulations.</p>	<p>Review risk assessment, security of equipment and maintenance schedule.</p>

		Report loss to insurance company.		
Loss of Clerk due to death, sudden/ longer term illness, incapacity or resignation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staffing team are aware of their responsibilities • Ensure all key tasks listed • Access to log in details, passwords and keys available 	<p>Management team to meet with Mayor to agree required immediate action and to allocate duties.</p> <p>Call team meeting to advise staff about the situation and what immediate action plans have been agreed.</p> <p>Mayor to inform Councillors and District Council.</p> <p>Inform insurance company to ascertain financial support available depending on the circumstances.</p> <p>IT contractor to be contacted to provide management team with access to Clerk's e-mails and PC.</p> <p>Call extraordinary meeting to confirm temporary cover arrangements.</p>	<p>To reallocate Clerk's responsibilities within the team on a temporary basis or consider locum support as necessary.</p> <p>For incapacity or long term illness, start absence management process and offer support to the Clerk as required.</p> <p>If loss is due to death or resignation obtain Council's agreement to commence recruitment processes for a permanent clerk.</p> <p>If loss is due to death, offer support to the Clerk's family and advise on any financial support available to them through the Council's insurance.</p> <p>Issue a press release about loss or temporary arrangements.</p>	<p>Ensure any temporary replacement or new Clerk has the necessary support through their induction to the role.</p> <p>Issue a press release about new or ongoing temporary arrangements.</p>

			Contact IT service provider to disable access to e-mail account/server.	
Death or serious injury to member of staff whilst carrying out Council duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff trained or acquainted with their duties with regard to H&S regulations • Ensure lone working risk assessments are completed and staff are aware of the requirements in the risk assessments • Ensure staff are not working alone when working at heights 	<p>First Aider to attend and Emergency services to be contacted in the first instance where applicable (fire services, police, ambulance etc.).</p> <p>Clerk to contact the member of staff's next of kin.</p> <p>Clerk to review CCTV if incident in CCTV coverage to identify what went wrong.</p> <p>Clerk to inform the Mayor and Councillors.</p> <p>Clerk to inform the insurance company.</p> <p>Clerk to inform HSE if appropriate.</p> <p>Clerk to call a team meeting to advise other members of staff and to offer support where needed.</p>	<p>Consider the need to recruit a temporary replacement and obtain Council approval.</p> <p>Offer support to the member of staff's family and advise on any financial support available to them through the Council's insurance.</p> <p>If loss is due to death, obtain Council's agreement to commence recruitment processes for a permanent replacement.</p> <p>Implement any action required by the HSE if the injury was work related.</p> <p>Issue a press release about loss if considered appropriate.</p>	Review cause of death or serious injury and update risk assessment and procedures to minimise the risk from future occurrences if work related.

		Clerk or Line Manager to make interim arrangements for duties/tasks to be covered.		
Loss of a member of staff due to death, sudden/ longer term illness, incapacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staffing team are aware of their responsibilities • Ensure written procedures exist for all key tasks where cover is not an option • Access to log in details, passwords and keys available 	<p>Clerk and Management team to meet to agree required immediate action and to allocate duties.</p> <p>Clerk to inform the Mayor and Councillors.</p> <p>Call team meeting to advise staff about the situation and what immediate action plans have been agreed.</p> <p>Inform insurance company to ascertain financial support available depending on the circumstances.</p> <p>IT contractor to be contacted to provide Clerk with access to the member of staff's e-mails and PC.</p>	<p>Consider the need to recruit a temporary replacement and obtain Council approval.</p> <p>Offer support to the member of staff's family and advise on any financial support available to them through the Council's insurance.</p> <p>If loss is due to death, obtain Council's agreement to commence recruitment processes for a permanent replacement.</p> <p>Contact IT service provider to disable access to e-mail account/server.</p>	Ensure any temporary replacement or new permanent post holder has the necessary support through their induction to the role.
Loss of Councillors due to multiple resignations (causing Council to be inquorate)		Clerk to inform remaining Councillors & staff.	South Hams District Council to decide on temporary working strategy for Council business to be	Review and resolve the cause of the multiple resignations.

		<p>Clerk to inform South Hams District Council's Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Cancel or postpone any immediately imminent Full Council meeting.</p> <p>Update website with any immediate implications for the public.</p>	<p>maintained followed by the instigation of a by election or co-option procedure.</p> <p>Issue a press release about temporary arrangements.</p> <p>Contact IT service provider to disable access to e-mail accounts.</p>	
<p>Loss of Internet connection resulting in no phones and no access to the server.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain Internet services from a reliable provider with good customer support record • Spare work mobile phone kept in Finance Office for emergency use. 	<p>Make enquiries to ascertain whether the loss of connection is specific to the Council offices or a town-wide problem.</p> <p>For town-wide connection loss, establish how long the loss is expected to last.</p> <p>Clerk to decide if staff living outside the area should go home to work.</p> <p>For a Council infrastructure problem, contact Internet provider to arrange emergency investigation and repair.</p>	<p>If the problem is expected to persist after the end of the working day, the Clerk should assess which staff should come into work the next day and what duties they can perform.</p>	<p>Review the cause of the connection loss and consider any infrastructure upgrades that may be needed.</p>

		Arrange for telephone calls to be diverted to a mobile phone.		
Loss of utilities to the Guildhall offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gas supply and equipment facilitating use of gas is serviced regularly in accordance with legislation and/or manufacturers recommendations Electrical equipment is subjected to regular inspections Electrical wiring and other fixed electrical equipment is inspected, checked and findings recorded and defects rectified Building work to be undertaken by competent tradesmen Ensure regular maintenance carried out 	<p>Make enquiries to ascertain whether the loss of electric/gas/water is specific to the Council offices or a town-wide problem.</p> <p>For town-wide issue (e.g. power cut), establish how long the issue is expected to last. Clerk to decide if staff living outside the affected area should go home to work.</p> <p>For a Council infrastructure problem, the TMO should call in emergency contractors to look into and repair the problem.</p>	<p>If the problem is expected to persist after the end of the working day, the Clerk should assess which staff should come into work the next day and what duties they can perform.</p> <p>If necessary, arrange for telephone calls to be diverted to a mobile phone.</p>	Review the cause of the issue and consider any infrastructure upgrades that may be needed.
Loss of significant amount of funds due to cyber crime or bank failure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain adequate cyber insurance cover Ensure online data protected by robust passwords which are regularly updated Ensure adequate controls are in place for making bank and card payments Ensure banking/card passwords and PINs are kept secure 	<p>Report theft / criminal activity to the bank and the police.</p> <p>Report loss to insurance company.</p> <p>Clerk to inform the Mayor and Councillors.</p>	<p>Liaise with bank and insurance company on how and when funds will be returned.</p> <p>Contact creditors to advise of any delay to payments.</p>	Review procedures to ensure improvements implemented where necessary.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a Bank which has the minimum credit rating specified in the Financial Regulations 	Place a temporary stop on orders.	Arrange staff meeting if payment of wages is going to be impacted.	
Insurance policy is withdrawn by Insurers due to a breach of terms and conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance cover requirements review carried out annually with Broker Any checks on members or staff required by Insurance Company carried out as required 	<p>Clerk to inform the Mayor and Councillors.</p> <p>Clerk to arrange a temporary closure of Council offices and all Council activities.</p> <p>Update website to inform the public of the Council closure.</p> <p>Insurance broker to be contacted to find alternative insurance cover.</p>	<p>Accept new insurance cover and advise Councillors that cover has been arranged.</p> <p>Reopen Council offices and activities.</p> <p>Update website to inform the public that the Council has re-opened.</p>	Review the cause of the breach of terms and conditions to minimise the risk from future occurrences.
Pandemic/epidemic affecting service delivery		<p>Follow Government advice on when to close Council offices.</p> <p>If the Government issue a stay at home order: Staff to relocate to working from home unless order allows for staff to be in work to carry out essential services. Arrange for telephone calls to be diverted to mobile phones.</p>	<p>Continue to follow government advice on when the Council offices can re-open.</p> <p>Postpone any Council meetings that cannot legally be held remotely.</p> <p>Clerk to check on staff welfare. Arrange regular Zoom/Teams meetings with staff to provide support.</p>	

		<p>Update the Council website to show offices closed and advise public to use phone or e-mail to contact the Council.</p> <p>Contact hirers of the Guildhall and Civic Hall to cancel bookings.</p>	<p>Ensure premises and working practices are suitable to ensure a safe return to work when allowed.</p>	
--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--



Civic Budget and Mayoral Allowance Policy

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

AGREED APRIL 2025

NEXT REVIEW MARCH 2026

Background

All Civic and Mayoral spending will be limited to the agreed budgets over the course of the financial year, therefore pre-planning of proposed events and larger commitments is essential. All major civic events should take place within the Council's financial year ending 31st March.

During the period from 1st April to 18th May a maximum spend of an amount equivalent to 1½ months of the allocated Civic Budget and Mayoral Allowance Budget for the financial year is allowed and must be agreed in advance with the Town Clerk.

Any surplus at the end of the financial year will not be carried forward.

The budgets must not be in deficit at the financial year end.

Mayoral Allowance

The Mayoral Allowance is to defray reasonable costs in order that the office holder is not out of pocket for fulfilling the role of Mayor. The Mayor can claim up to the amount of the Councillor Allowance by submitting claims to the Finance and HR Manager.

Expenditure which can be claimed:

- Mileage to and from events
- Donations to charities (up to £25 per event)
- Reasonable clothing allowance for Civic events
- Additional Telephone, stationery and printing

Civic Budget

Expenditure which is allowed:

- a. Funding for all the formal and informal Civic events and costs associated with the role of the Mayor during the Mayoral year.

These may include:

- Mayor Making and reception
- The Civic Service
- Remembrance Sunday (in conjunction with the British Legion)
- The Civic Event (Community fundraising event)
- Annual town events where the Mayor is invited, such as Christmas Light Switch On

PLEASE NOTE - Civic Funerals (as and when required) and refreshments at a wake for Honoured Citizens/Freemen will be funded from the general reserve up to a value of £1,000.

- b. Civic events supported by the Council involving, but not necessarily arranged by, the Mayor, or agreed Councillors. This expenditure must be agreed in advance by the Mayor.

These may include:

- Hosting the Mayor of Vire, to include up to £25 for a gift and wrapping/cards
- Receptions for Civic visitors
- Hosting small award ceremonies (including the annual Community Awards), to include up to £25 for an award
- Hosting meetings of community groups

- c. The costs of any events held or attended by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor or Councillors deputising in their place in the course of their duties in the Mayoral Year.

These may include:

- Councillors and volunteers thank you receptions
- Refreshments when organising civic or mayoral events at the Guildhall during the year
- The incidental costs of attending community and charitable events e.g. purchase of tickets for both the event and raffles
- Charity functions, and to cover any costs when attending functions e.g. the purchase of raffle tickets, collections, etc

- d. Supporting the Mayor in raising money toward their chosen charity.

These may include:

- Providing facilities paid for by the Civic Budget in raising funds for the chosen charity e.g. reception in the Guildhall, hire of the Civic Hall, etc

PLEASE NOTE: All use of the Civic Hall must be paid for in full from the Civic Budget to the Paige Adams account. No free use can be granted by the Mayor.

Expenditure which is not allowed:

The Civic budget must not be used to pay for

- Gifts of monies or goods (including flowers) other than to charities. NOTE: Any requests for contributions to groups and charities outside of fundraising must be considered by Paige Adams or the Town Council Grants process.
- NOTE: The policy will allow an exception for the purchase of flowers for incoming and outgoing Mayors and their consorts plus retiring Councillors to the value of £25 per bouquet.
- Parking fines
- Social events internal to the Council.
- Items normally covered by the Mayoral and Councillor Allowance e.g. costs associated with the use of home as office, personal telephone bills, etc.
- printing fliers/leaflets/posters etc. other than for civic events covered in a. above.

Reporting and monitoring procedures

The Mayor is asked to account for their spending and to submit these expenses, along with the Mayor's monthly engagements, as a quarterly agenda item to Council Matters meetings:

- All amounts submitted for reimbursement from the Town Council will be signed off and paid according to the Town Council financial regulations.
- Amounts of £500 and over need to be agreed by the Council Matters Committee in advance of agreement. Details of the proposed expenditure will need to be submitted, to ensure contributions and events are in line with Civic function and the Town Council priorities. If agreed it can then be submitted for reimbursement/payment to the Town Council Finance Officer.

Once 85% spend of the budget is reached the Council Matters Committee must be informed and any future spend must be agreed in advance with the Town Clerk.

Any outstanding civic expenses need to be submitted by the outgoing mayor by the end of June, when the preceding mayor's budget will be closed.



WORKING TIME AND LEAVE POLICY

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

March 2026

INDEX

- 1 INTRODUCTION

- 2 WORKING TIME
 - 2.1 Hours of Work
 - 2.2 Overtime
 - 2.3 Time of in lieu (TOIL)
 - 2.4 Flexible Working

- 3 PAID LEAVE
 - 3.1 Annual leave
 - 3.2 Bank/Public Holidays
 - 3.3 Extra Statutory Leave Days
 - 3.4 Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave
 - 3.5 Compassionate Leave
 - 3.6 Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay
 - 3.7 Public Duties
 - 3.8 Jury Service **[Changes]**
 - 3.9 Other Authorised Paid Leave

- 4 UNPAID LEAVE
 - 4.1 Medical Appointments **[New]**
 - 4.2 Parental Leave
 - 4.3 Emergency Time Off for Dependents
 - 4.4 Carers Leave
 - 4.5 Other Unpaid Leave

4.6 Implications of Authorised Unpaid Leave and Industrial Action for Local Government Pensionable Service [Changes]

1 INTRODUCTION

Totnes Town Council is open to the public from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays and statutory holidays) and the office should be manned by at least two staff during these core hours under normal circumstances.

Whilst every effort will be made to achieve this, there will be times, such as during the Christmas recess, when it will not be possible. The Town Clerk has overall delegated responsibility to manage the staff and office cover. If the office has to close during core hours, then the Chair of Council Matters and/or the Mayor will be informed by the Clerk or in their absence a member of the management team.

2 WORKING TIME

2.1 HOURS OF WORK

Employees hours of work are set out in their contracts of employment and any subsequent change of contract letters.

2.2 OVERTIME

Overtime is time worked beyond the contracted hours. It is preferable for TOIL (time in lieu) to be used but where this is not practical all overtime will be authorized in advance by the Town Clerk. Overtime is paid at standard hourly rate unless the hours are before 7am or after 10pm (with the exclusion of the Town Clerk), and on Sunday or public bank holidays where a double rate is payable (all staff). Amendments to this arrangement may be made contractually, for example with the caretaking hours to ensure staff recruitment and retention.

Procedures relating to overtime are set out in the Staff Handbook.

2.3 TIME OFF IN LIEU (TOIL)

An employee is entitled to take time off in lieu of additional hours worked over and above his/her contracted hours. Any additional hours worked are subject to agreement and recognise the need to provide staff cover, to maintain the necessary deadlines, provide members of the public with the expected service levels and the attendance at Council meetings.

Procedures relating to TOIL are set out in the Staff Handbook.

2.4 FLEXIBLE WORKING

Under provisions set out in the Employment Rights Act 1996 and regulations made under it, all employees have a statutory right to ask their employer for a change to their contractual terms and conditions of employment to work flexibly. As a good employer, Totnes Town Council has always had a positive view of flexible working. This policy sets out the framework in which variable working will be managed within the Council.

Eligibility

The right to request flexible working is available to employees from the first day of their employment.

A maximum of two flexible working requests can be made within any twelve month period. Only one request for flexible working may be live at any one time.

The legislation does not provide an automatic right to flexible working. There is an emphasis on the importance of both the employee and the employer considering the terms of the request and attempting to reach an outcome that suits both parties. The employee has a responsibility to think carefully about their desired working pattern when making an application, and the manager is required to follow a specific procedure to ensure requests are considered objectively.

Timescales

Requests will be considered in a timely manner. The entire process, including hearing an appeal will be completed within 2 months of the written request being received.

Roles and Responsibilities

Normally, the Town Clerk will consider flexible working requests and appeals will be heard by a Panel of the Personnel Sub-Committee.

If the request is being made by the Town Clerk, this should be referred to the Council Matters Committee, who will set up a panel to consider the request and a separate panel to consider any appeal.

Representation

Employees have the right to representation, either by a trade union representative or a work colleague, at the consultation meeting and appeal stages.

Representatives have the right to address the meeting or appeal. They may also ask questions and present the employee's case. However, they have no right to answer questions on the employee's behalf.

What is Flexible Working?

Flexible working can mean a change to the number of hours worked, the times worked or the place of work.

Some examples of flexible working are:

- Part-time working;
- Homeworking or hybrid working;
- Job sharing/Flexible working hours;
- Term time only working

How to apply

Anyone considering flexible working should first discuss with their manager the reasons for the request to change their working pattern and how they think it could work. A formal application can then be made in writing to the Town Clerk. It should set out clearly:

- the date of the request;
- the change the employee is requesting to the terms and conditions of their employment in relation to their hours, times or place of work;
- the date the employee would like the change to come into effect;
- if and when the employee has made a previous request for flexible working to the employer.

Considering the Request

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

All requests will be carefully considered by the Town Clerk (or a Panel of the Council Matters Committee if in relation to the Town Clerk), involving relevant managers where appropriate.

When considering a request, the Town Clerk should:

- Consider the request fairly;
- Consider the potential benefits and/or impacts that the change would have for the employee and the organisation;
- Consider any scope for compromise.

Flexible working requests will be agreed where possible. Requests may, however, be refused where there is a genuine business reason to do so.

Employers can reject an application for any of the following reasons:

- Burden of additional costs;
- Inability to reorganise work among other staff;
- Inability to recruit additional staff;
- Detrimental impact on quality;
- Detrimental effect on customer service;
- Detrimental impact on performance;
- Insufficient work available during the periods the employee proposes to work; or
- The proposal does not fit in with planned structural changes.

Consultation Meeting to Consider the Request

Where a request cannot be agreed in full without further information or discussion, the employee will be invited to a consultation meeting with the Town Clerk. The employee's Line Manager may also be asked to attend.

The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the request, obtain additional information where needed and fully explore the benefits/impact of the requested changes. Where there are concerns that the request may not be able to be granted in full, alternative arrangements can be discussed with a view to securing some of the benefits of the application.

The employee will be given 5 working days' notice of the meeting and will have the right to representation. A written record will be made of the meeting.

Making the Decision

After the meeting, the Town Clerk (or Panel of the Council Matters Committee if in relation to the Town Clerk) will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to the employee and to the Council against any adverse impact of implementing the changes.

The employee will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as is reasonably practicable after the meeting. The request may be granted in full or in part: for example, the Council may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period. The employee will be given the right to appeal the decision if the employee's request is not upheld or is only upheld in part.

If an application is refused, the employee will be notified of the reasons why the request cannot be accommodated at this time. The grounds on which a request may be refused are set out in the section above entitled 'Considering the Request'.

Regardless of whether or not an application is approved, a maximum of two flexible working requests can be made within any twelve month period. Only one request for flexible working may be live at any one time.

Right of Appeal

An employee has the right of appeal against the Council's decision. An Appeal should be submitted in writing to the Town Clerk who will arrange an appeal meeting.

The employee will be given 5 working days' notice of the meeting and will have the right to representation. A written record will be made of the meeting.

Appeals will be heard by a Panel of the Personnel Sub-Committee. Following the meeting the employee will be notified of the outcome in writing.

Review

If a trial period has been agreed, then the Town Clerk and the appropriate Manager will undertake this review. This is to ensure that the change in work pattern is working effectively

and that there is no adverse impact on either the work of the Council or the efficient working of the team. If there appears to be a problem, a further meeting will be set up with the employee to consult them before a decision is made either to continue, to vary the working pattern further or to revert to the original working arrangement.

At the end of the review the Town Clerk will confirm in writing whether or not the change in working pattern will be made permanent. If it may not continue, notice will be given that the working pattern cannot be accommodated and will end on a specified date.

All flexible working will be reviewed periodically by management to ensure that the needs of the Council continue to be met.

3 PAID LEAVE

3.1 ANNUAL LEAVE

The Council takes a positive view on work/life balance issues and believes that employees should take responsibility for regularly taking annual leave to ensure their own health, safety, and wellbeing in accordance with the Working Time Regulations.

Annual leave must only be taken with Line Manager approval. Employees must give as much notice as possible when requesting annual leave. Such notice should be at least twice the number of days' leave that the employee wishes to take as annual leave.

The annual leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March.

Entitlement for Totnes Town Council employees is as follows

On appointment	23 days + 5 Statutory + Bank Hols
After 5 yrs continuous LG service	27 days + 5 Statutory + Bank Hols
After 10 yrs continuous LG service	29 days + 5 Statutory + Bank Hols

When an employee's entitlement changes during the leave year (e.g. a change in hours or completion of 5 or 10 years continuous service), the leave for that year will be re-calculated at the point of change.

Continuous service includes service with one or more of the employers covered by the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government, etc) (Modification) Order 1999, as amended (the Modification Order).

Employees who join and/or leave the Council during the annual leave year will receive a holiday entitlement proportionate to their completed service during the leave year.

In the event of the employee leaving the Council, payment for any leave which has been taken in excess of their accrued part year entitlement will be deducted from the final wage payment.

An employee leaving the Councils' employment should try to take all outstanding accrued annual leave before they leave. Where it has not been possible to take the outstanding accrued leave, a payment in lieu may be made with the agreement of the Council Matters Committee.

All part time and job share employees will have a pro rata entitlement to annual leave, bank holiday and statutory leave, calculated and expressed in hours. Less than 0.5 hours are rounded down and 0.5 or more are rounded up.

Carry Over of Annual Leave

Up to a maximum of 1 working week of annual leave (pro rata for part time employees), may be carried over from one leave year to the next with the agreement of the Clerk.

3.2 BANK/PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

All employees are entitled to paid bank/public holiday leave. The Council recognises eight bank holidays during the calendar year, although the dates of these may vary from year to year.

Part-time employees have a pro rata entitlement to bank/public holiday leave. This is calculated with reference to the annual entitlement of a full-time employee.

3.3 EXTRA STATUTORY LEAVE DAYS

In July 2020 the Town Councillors took the decision to increase employees' entitlement to extra statutory annual leave days from two to five days per year in addition to annual leave and public holidays.

The 5 extra statutory days will be taken over the Christmas period on dates set each year by the Town Clerk.

Part time and job share employees will receive a pro rata entitlement to the set extra statutory days' holidays.

3.4 MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND ADOPTION LEAVE

Please see the Council's Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy.

Totnes Town Council is committed to ensuring that all pregnant/adopting employees take the leave that they are entitled to and will follow the requirements of the NJC Green Book in relation to requests for maternity, paternity and adoption leave (National Joint Council Green Book (May 2018) reference: Part 2.11, Page 16)

If you are having or adopting a baby, you are entitled to up to 52 weeks' maternity/adoption leave. This comprises of 26 weeks' ordinary maternity/adoption leave immediately followed by up to a further 26 weeks' additional maternity/adoption leave. Maternity leave must commence no earlier than 11 weeks before the EWC, or from the day following childbirth if

that is earlier. From the beginning of the fourth week before the EWC, an employee's maternity leave may be triggered if they are absent due to a pregnancy-related illness.

An employee will continue to accrue annual leave and bank holidays during her maternity/adoption leave. Staff on maternity/adoption leave who, as a result, are unable to take all their annual leave entitlement in a particular year are allowed to carry forward any untaken annual leave to the following leave year.

Annual leave cannot be taken during a period of maternity/adoption Leave. It must be taken either prior to, or following maternity/adoption leave. Any annual leave taken following the birth/placement of the baby will be deemed to be a 'return to work' for the purposes of maternity regulations. The employee will therefore be expected to resume her normal duties following the period of leave.

All sickness absence prior to starting leave will be administered under the normal sickness absence procedure. The employee will receive contractual or Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), as appropriate. In cases where pregnancy related sickness absence occurs, after the beginning of the fourth week before the EWC, maternity leave will start automatically from the first day of absence. An employee who is unable to return to work at the end of their maternity leave, due to sickness, will be treated as being on sick leave in accordance with the Town Council's Sickness Absence Policy.

Ante-natal care

During your pregnancy, your doctor/midwife will make regular appointments with you for ante-natal checks, scans, tests etc. You are entitled to take reasonable time off work to attend these appointments, regardless of your length of service or the hours that you work. This time off will be paid and you will not be expected to make up the time. You should however give us as much notice as possible of your appointments and, after the first one, should present the appointment card from the hospital or clinic. An expectant father or the partner (including same sex) of a pregnant woman is entitled to take unpaid time off work to accompany the woman to up to 2 of her ante-natal appointments. The time off is capped at six and a half hours for each appointment. "Partner" includes the spouse or civil partner of the pregnant woman and a person (of either sex) in a long-term relationship with her. Employees who are adopting a child are entitled to take time off to attend adoption appointments.

Ordinary Paternity Leave (OPL)

An employee whose partner gives birth to a child, or who is the biological father or either adoptive parent of the child, is entitled to two weeks' ordinary paternity leave. OPL can commence from the date of the child's birth, or child's placement with the adopter, or within 56 days of the birth or date of placement. If the child is born early, OPL may be taken between the date of birth and up to the 56th day after the EWC.

Ordinary Paternity Leave can be taken in a single two week block or as two separate one week blocks and must be taken within eight weeks of the birth or adoption of the child. Only one period of leave is available to employees irrespective of whether more than one child is born as the result of the same pregnancy.

If you choose to start your OPL on a fixed and predetermined date and the child is not born or placed for adoption by that date, you must change the date you want to start your leave

and notify us in writing as soon as you reasonably can. If you take both OPL and shared parental leave you must take ordinary paternity leave first.

You must inform the council in writing of your intention to take OPL by the end of the qualifying week, unless this is not reasonably practicable. You must tell us:

- The week the baby is due,
- Whether you wish to take one or two weeks' leave, and,
- When you want your leave to start.

In the case of an adopted child, you must give notice of your intention to take ordinary paternity leave no later than seven days after the date on which notification of the match with the child was given by the adoption agency. The notice must specify the date the child is expected to be placed for adoption, the date you intend to start ordinary paternity leave, the length of the intended ordinary paternity leave period and the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child.

You can change your mind about the date on which you want the leave to start providing you tell your manager at least 28 days in advance (unless this is not reasonably practicable).

3.5 COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

Compassionate leave of up to five working days with full pay may be granted to an employee by the Town Clerk upon the death or serious illness of a partner, child, close relative or person of significant connection. In exceptional circumstances, this period may be extended by up to a further five working days with or without pay at the discretion of the Town Clerk. Any further leave will be considered by Council Matters under their delegated authority.

Supported leave of up to five working days **with pay** may be granted to an employee by the line manager in circumstances where a partner, child, close relative or person of a significant relationship has been diagnosed with a serious illness or undergoes a serious medical procedure. In exceptional circumstances, the period may be extended by up to a further five working days with or without pay at the discretion of the Town Clerk. Any further leave will be considered by Council Matters under their delegated authority.

3.6 PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE AND PAY

Parental Bereavement Leave provides up to two weeks' leave for employees following the loss of a child who was under the age of 18 or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

In order to qualify for parental bereavement leave and pay, the employee must be either:

- the child's legal parent; or
- a parent's partner, in an enduring family relationship with the child who has passed away and their parent; or
- an individual with a caring relationship to the child, such as a "parent in fact", who are defined as a person who for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child's death has lived with the child in the person's home, and had day to day responsibility for the child's care (provided they are not paid for that role, foster payments excepted); or

- the "intended parent" of a child who has passed away, i.e. a parent using a surrogate; or
- the "natural parent" of a child who has passed away who is named in a court order, i.e. where a court orders some contact for an adopted child's birth parent; or
- the adopter of a child who has passed away.

All employees, who are eligible as above, are entitled to 2 weeks' parental leave regardless of their length of service.

The two weeks' leave can be taken, either as one block or in two one-week blocks. The leave may be taken at any time within 56 weeks of the child's death.

Notification requirements

If the employee wishes the leave to start within 56 days of the child's death, notice must be given to the Town Clerk before the day the employee wishes the leave to start, or where that is not possible as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Employees must give the Town Clerk at least one week's notice if they wish the leave to start after the 56-day period.

When giving notice the employee must specify, ideally in writing, to the Town Clerk:

- the date of the child's death,
- the date on which the employee intends the leave to start, and
- whether the period of absence is for one week or two weeks.

Cancellation of Parental Bereavement Leave

If an employee has asked to begin parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days of the date of the child's death, they can cancel the parental bereavement leave, as long as they inform the Town Clerk prior to when they would have been due to start work.

If an employee has asked to begin parental bereavement leave more than 56 days after their child's death, then they can cancel their request for parental bereavement leave, as long as they inform the Town Clerk at least one week in advance.

Employees cannot cancel any week of parental bereavement leave that has already begun.

Parental Bereavement Pay eligibility

In order to qualify for parental bereavement pay employees must meet the eligibility criteria as above and also have:

- at least 26 weeks' continuous service by the week before the week in which their child passes away, and still be employed by the Council on the day on which the child passed away;
- weekly average earnings over the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions in the eight weeks prior to the week before the child's death.

Parental Bereavement Pay

Parental bereavement leave will be paid at the Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP) rate or 90 per cent of the average weekly earnings, whichever is the lower.

In order to receive parental bereavement pay, an employee must notify the Town Clerk in writing within 28 days of the start of the week's (or weeks') leave or, if that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Notice must include the parent's name and the date of the child's death. Furthermore, on the first occasion leave is taken, the employee must also provide a written declaration that they meet one of the qualifying conditions in terms of their relationship with the child.

Parental bereavement leave for employees who are not eligible for parental bereavement pay will be unpaid.

Continuous Service

Parental Bereavement Leave counts for the purpose of continuous service.

Returning to work following parental bereavement leave

Employees have the right to resume working in the same job when returning to work from parental bereavement leave if the period of leave, when added to any other period of statutory leave (typically maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, or shared parental leave) in relation to the same child, is 26 weeks or less.

Employees are entitled to return to an alternative job that is suitable and appropriate, rather than the same job, if:

- the period of leave taken is more than 26 weeks, when added to other statutory leave (typically maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, or shared parental leave) in relation to the same child; and
- it is not reasonably practicable for them to return to the same job.

3.7 PUBLIC DUTIES

Up to 5 days' leave with pay per year may be given with the permission of the Town/Parish Clerk for serving on public bodies or undertaking public duties, e.g. magistrate's service, school governing bodies, and political appointments for those employees whose posts are not politically restricted.

Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings, employees should claim and pay the allowance to the Council.

3.8 JURY SERVICE

When on jury service, employees are required to claim an allowance for loss of earnings, which is available from the court. Totnes Town Council will pay the difference between the

amount of this allowance and the employee's normal contractual pay. Employees will receive a certificate of loss of earnings form along with their invitation to jury service, which the Town Clerk will arrange to complete for them in order to enable the allowance to be claimed.

The Council undertakes to make this 'top up' payment for a period of up to four weeks. If jury service is likely to extend beyond this time, consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis whether to extend the payment for an additional period.

If the employee's absence is likely to cause substantial damage to the business then the Town Clerk will discuss this with them. The employee can, if they choose to do so, ask the court to be excused, or to have their participation deferred. They are not obliged to request this, but if they do then the Town Clerk may write a letter in support of their application.

3.9 OTHER AUTHORISED PAID LEAVE

From time to time exceptional circumstances may arise where paid leave is necessary in addition to the types of leave already detailed above.

Totnes Town Council will follow government guidance in relation to circumstances outside the control of the Town Council. Where the NJC has issued guidance in such circumstances this will be applied.

4 UNPAID LEAVE

4.1 MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

In general, routine medical, dental, optician or health appointments should be made outside working hours wherever possible.

The Council appreciates that it is not always possible to avoid appointments during the working day. Where this is the case, employees should make a request to their line manager to agree a convenient time, giving as much notice as possible. Requests will not be unreasonably refused. Employees will be required either to use Annual Leave/TOIL or take unpaid leave.

Employees who have a serious or long-term medical condition which will require appointments during their working day should discuss their situation with their manager so that appropriate arrangements may be considered.

You may be required to provide evidence of any appointment for which time off is needed.

4.2 PARENTAL LEAVE

Parental Leave applies to all parents (birth or adoptive) and those people with parental responsibilities and allows for them to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child. Each parent and person with parental responsibility are entitled to take 18 weeks' parental leave for each child.

Parental leave may be particularly useful if you require time off to care for your child but have used up, or are not entitled to, other types of family-friendly leave.

Employees who are considering taking parental leave following the birth of a child or the placement of the child for adoption, should bear in mind that they may also be entitled to paid maternity / paternity / adoption / shared parental leave. Further information can be found in the Councils Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy.

The right to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave is subject to the following conditions:

- The rights are acquired after one year's continuous employment with the Council and applies to both parents.
- The employee must provide evidence of parenthood or parental responsibility where requested i.e. a birth certificate or adoption papers.
- The employee must give the Town Clerk at least 21 days' notice in writing to take leave. The notice must specify the dates on which the period of leave is to begin and end.
- Where an employee requests parental leave to begin when their child is born, their notice must specify the expected week of childbirth and the duration of the period of leave. The employee must give this notice to the Town Clerk at least 21 days before the expected week of childbirth. If the child is born earlier/later than expected, the employee should agree any changes to the start of the leave with the Town Clerk.
- Where the ordinary parental leave is in respect of an adopted child and is to begin on the date of the placement, the employee's notice must be given to the Town Clerk at least 21 days before the beginning of the week in which the child is to be placed for adoption, or as soon as is reasonably practicable thereafter. It must specify the week in which the placement is expected to occur and the duration of the period of ordinary parental leave requested.
- The employee can only take leave in blocks of one or more weeks except where the child is disabled, in which case it may be taken one day at a time.
- The employees may not take more than four weeks' leave in respect of any individual child in any year. For these purposes a year is the period of 12 months beginning when the employee first becomes entitled to ordinary parental leave in respect of the child in question, and each successive period of 12 months beginning on the anniversary of that date.

The Town Clerk may postpone the leave (other than where parental leave has been requested immediately after childbirth or immediately after placement for adoption) for a maximum of 6 months if there are sound business reasons for doing so. The Town Clerk should seek agreement with the employee over mutually acceptable arrangements and confirm the outcome in writing within 7 days of the request.

If an employee falls ill during parental leave, the absence will be treated as sick leave for those periods covered by a doctor's certificate.

Managers should keep a record of leave taken under this entitlement, so that it is clear when the entitlement is exhausted.

Continuous Service

Parental leave counts for the purpose of continuous service.

Returning to work following parental leave

An employee who returns to work after a period of parental leave is entitled to return to the job in which they were employed prior to the absence if it was an isolated period of leave lasting four weeks or less. If the period of parental leave followed on immediately from another period of statutory leave, the employee's right to return depends on the total length of leave taken.

4.3 EMERGENCY TIME OFF FOR DEPENDENTS

All employees (regardless of their length of service) have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work in order to deal with particular unexpected emergencies affecting their dependants.

A dependant is:

- A spouse, civil partner, child or parent;
- A person who lives with the employee (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder or employee);
- Any other person who would reasonably rely on the employee for assistance if they fell ill or were injured or assaulted, or who would rely on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury; or
- In relation to the disruption or termination of care for a dependant or any other person who reasonably relies on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care.

Under this provision, an employee is entitled to take time off work:

- Where a dependant falls ill, gives birth, or is injured or assaulted;
- To provide assistance following the death of a dependant;
- Where there has been an unexpected disruption to, or termination of, the arrangements for the care of a dependant; and
- To deal with an emergency relating to a child of the employee that occurs unexpectedly at the child's school.

Although there is no requirement to give notice the employee must, as soon as possible, tell their line manager the reason for their absence and how long they expect to be away from work.

This leave is unpaid. All employment rights, including accrual of annual leave, continue during the period of leave.

Employees who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme may 'buy back' pension lost during authorised unpaid leave, as set out in this policy. See the section entitled 'Implications of Authorised Unpaid Leave and Industrial Action for Local Government Pensionable Service.

4.4 CARERS LEAVE

All employees (regardless of their length of service) have entitlement to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:

- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months
- a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- care needs because of their old age

A dependant is:

- a spouse, civil partner, child or parent;
- A person who lives with the employee (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder or employee); or
- any other person who would reasonably rely on you to provide or arrange care.

Employees are entitled to carer's leave from their first day of work for their employer.

Carer's leave is unpaid. All employment rights, including accrual of annual leave, continue during the period of leave.

Employees can take up to one week of leave every 12 months. A 'week' means the length of time they usually work over 7 days. For example, if someone usually works 3 days a week, they can take 3 days of carer's leave.

They can either take a whole week off or take individual days or half days throughout the year.

If an employee needs to care for more than one person, they cannot take a week of carer's leave for each dependant. They can only take one week every 12 months. They can use the week of leave on more than one dependant.

Employees need to give their employer notice before they want their leave to start.

If the request is for half a day or a day, the notice period must be at least 3 days.

If the request is for more than one day, the notice period must be at least twice as long as the requested leave. For example, if the request is for 2 days, the notice period must be at least 4 days.

The notice period needs to be in full days, even if the request includes half day amounts.

Any request should be addressed to the Town Clerk.

Employees do not need to give evidence of their dependant's care needs.

If the absence would cause serious disruption to the Town Council, the employee can be asked to take the leave at a different time.

If they delay it, the employer must:

- agree another date within one month of the requested date for the leave
- put the reason for the delay and new date in writing to the employee within 7 days of the original request, and before the requested start date of the leave

Pension During Carer's Leave

Employees who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme may 'buy back' pension lost during authorised unpaid leave, as set out in this policy. See the section entitled 'Implications of Authorised Unpaid Leave and Industrial Action for Local Government Pensionable Service'.

4.5 OTHER UNPAID LEAVE

In addition to annual leave staff are entitled to request up to a maximum of one working week off as unpaid leave. This must be taken as a minimum of half a day and will align with the annual leave year (April – March).

The Town Clerk will consider any requested for unpaid time off in relation to the business need and other pre-booked leave within the team.

Any unpaid time off taken to deal with emergencies involving a 'dependant' will be included in this unpaid leave entitlement.

4.6 IMPLICATIONS OF AUTHORISED UNPAID LEAVE AND INDUSTRIAL ACTION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSIONABLE SERVICE

The following information relates to employees who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Relevant child-related leave in the Local Government Pension Scheme means:

- ordinary maternity or adoption leave – normally the first 26 weeks
- paid additional maternity or adoption leave – normally week 27 to week 39
- paid shared parental leave
- paternity leave
- paid parental bereavement leave and
- paid neonatal care leave

During a period of relevant child-related leave, the employee's pension is usually worked out using their Assumed Pensionable Pay. Assumed Pensionable Pay is a notional figure that is used to make sure their pension is not affected by the pay reduction. They would continue

to build up a pension in the LGPS as if they were working normally and receiving normal pay.

Assumed Pensionable Pay does not apply during:

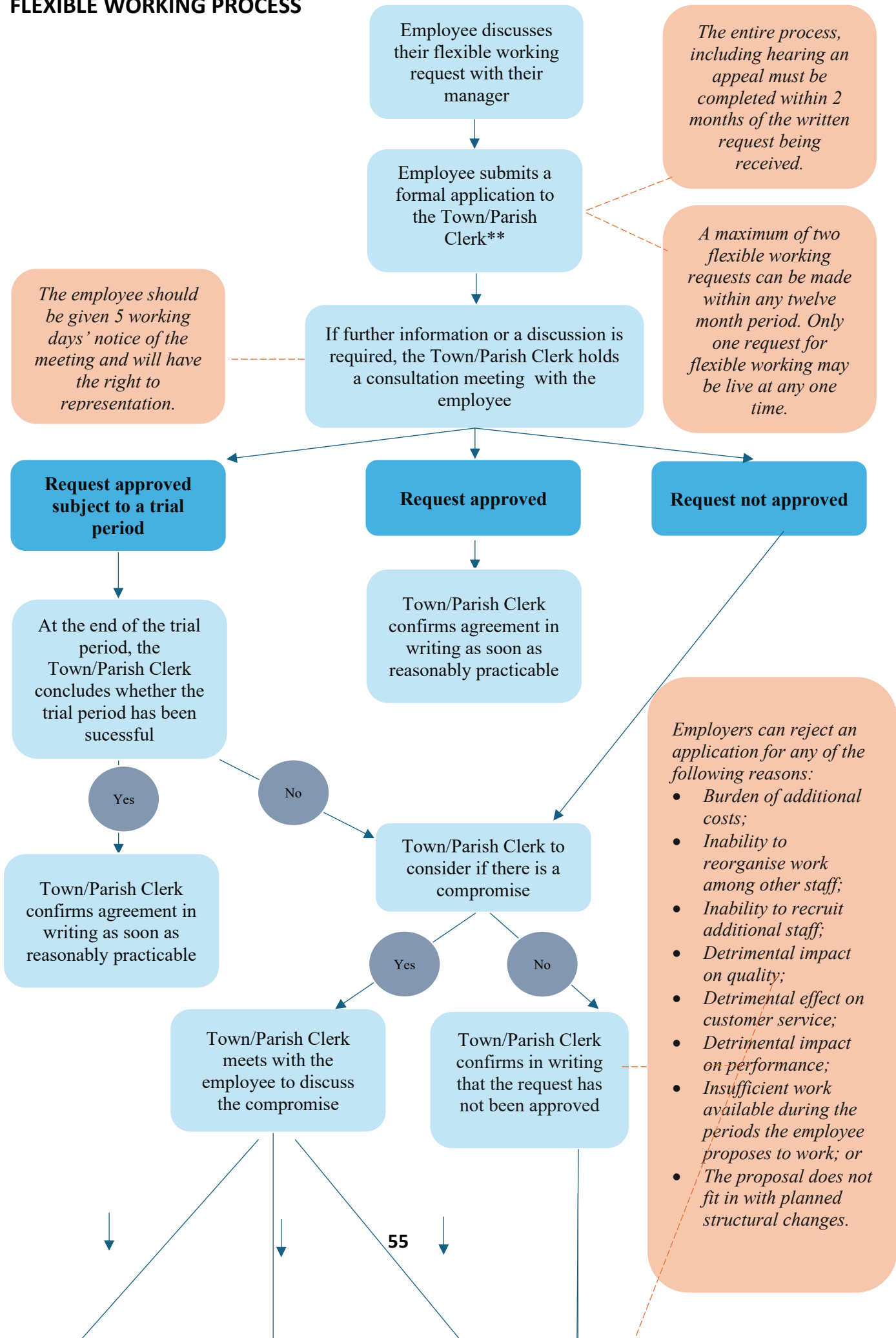
- unpaid additional maternity/adoption leave (normally from week 40 – 52)
- unpaid shared parental leave
- unpaid parental bereavement leave
- unpaid neonatal care leave
- unpaid carers leave
- parental leave, which is always unpaid
-

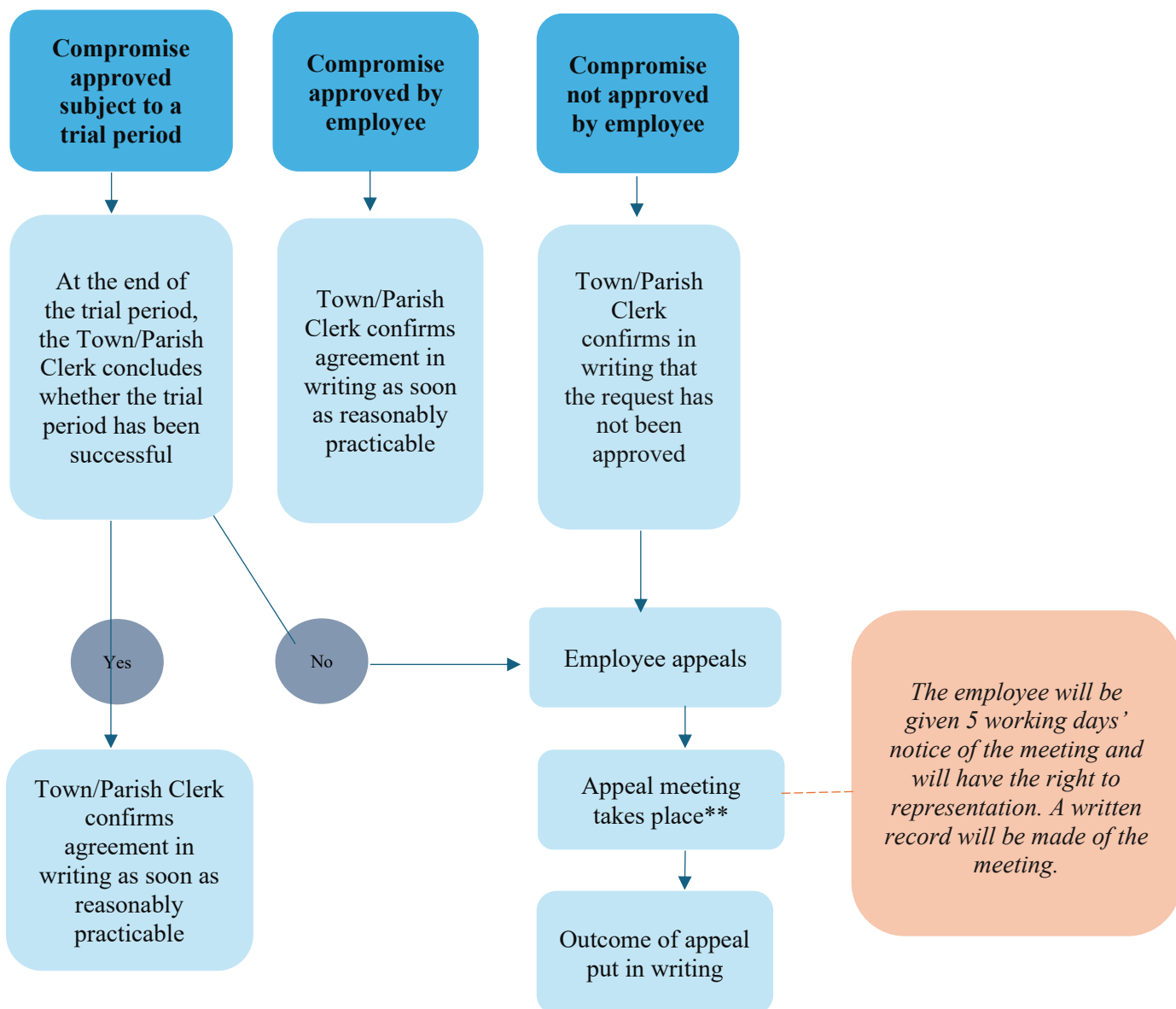
These unpaid periods of leave will not count for pension purposes unless the employee pays extra pension contributions to buy the pension they have 'lost'. The extra contributions are known as Additional Pension Contributions or APCs. If an employee elects to pay APCs to buy 'lost' pension, they must notify the Town/Parish Clerk of this in writing. If they do so within 30 days of returning to work, the cost will be split between the employee and employer.

If you are away from work for a day or more due to industrial action the period will not count for pension purposes unless you elect to pay Additional Pension Contributions to purchase the 'lost' pension. The cost of purchasing the 'lost' pension would be met fully by you unless your employer voluntarily chooses to contribute.

Employees can use the 'Buy Lost Pension Calculator' on the LGPS Member website to find out more about this option. To do so, they would need some information about the amount of pay 'lost' in the unpaid period. This can be requested from the Town/Parish Clerk.

FLEXIBLE WORKING PROCESS





***Normally, the Town/Parish Clerk will consider flexible working requests and appeals will be heard by a Panel of the Personnel Sub-Committee.*

If the request is being made by the Town Clerk, this should be referred to the Council Matters Committee, who will set up a panel to consider the request and a separate panel to consider any appeal.